

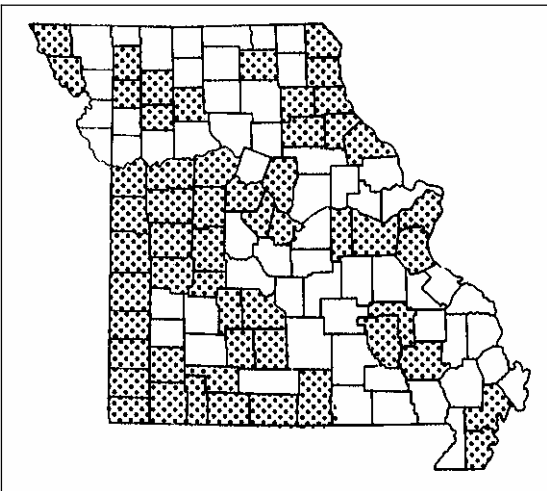
Osage Orange

Maclura pomifera (Raf.) Schneid.

Probably not a native tree to Missouri, the hedge tree, hedge apple, or *bois-d'arc*, as it is sometimes called, was planted extensively in the state for fence row and for erosion control. It has escaped cultivation and is now found throughout the state, at least in most farming communities. It grows best on deep, rich soils, but will grow just about anywhere.

The sapwood is light yellow and usually fairly narrow. The heartwood is golden yellow to bright orange, darkening to a rich orange-brown upon exposure. The coloring matter is readily soluble in warm water. The bark is orange-brown, deeply furrowed and somewhat shreddy. The wood may be confused with that of black locust, though black locust is not as yellow and has green and gray tinges. Growth rings are distinct and the wood is ring porous. It is very hard, strong, stiff and durable. The wood machines well and polishes to a high luster.

The source of most hedge or Osage orange lumber is from scattered logs usually cut from old fencerows. Thus, it is not common at local sawmills. The only commercial use made of this species was for archery bows, fence posts and telephone pole insulator pins. Most of the archery use has changed to fiberglass. It has a natural durability greater than any other wood. While not readily available, when properly dried it can be an interesting wood for crafts and novelty items for a home workshop.



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